

Healthy Communities



EPA's cornerstone mission is protecting public health and safeguarding the environment—our lands, our waters and our air—upon which New Englanders depend. To achieve this broad goal, we're focusing not just on pristine environments such as Cape Cod Bay, but on the communities where we all live. As traffic congestion worsens and weekend jaunts become less appealing, the quality of life in the neighborhoods where we live and work becomes

increasingly paramount. This is especially true for the millions of New Englanders living in urban areas. EPA is strongly committed to making our cities more livable—revitalizing contaminated sites, restoring urban rivers and reducing lead poisoning and asthma, being just a few of our strategies. Outside of our cities, we're promoting smart growth development efforts and continuing our close partnerships with the region's nine Tribal Nations.

Corinna, Maine: A Superfund Success

Like many New England towns, Corinna, Maine's economic fortunes have long been tied to the textile industry. In Corinna's case, the mill industry was Eastland Woolen Mill, a large mill complex that for decades dominated the town center and provided virtually all of the local jobs. So when Eastland Woolen closed its doors in 1996, leaving 300 locals jobless and a big environmental mess in its wake, it's no wonder Corinna's 2,145 residents were nervous about the town's economic future.

Contamination on the 21-acre mill property was serious enough to warrant its listing in 1999 as a Superfund site. EPA has since demolished the 250,000-square-foot mill and the Main Street bridge, and diverted Main Street and the East Branch of the Sebasticook River so that 75,000 cubic yards of contaminated soils could be excavated. EPA has spent more than \$30 million on the cleanup since 1999.

Just as important, EPA gave the town an \$82,500 Superfund Redevelopment Grant to develop an economic recovery plan. The reuse plan, developed in close collaboration between EPA, architects, residents and town leaders, includes a redesigned village center with mixed-use commercial and residential zoning, riverfront walking paths and a new recreational trail bridge for bikers and snowmobilers. "We're looking to transform Corinna from a mill town to a New England village with lots of walking opportunities, little shops and wildlife areas," said Town Manager Judy Doore, who spearheaded the reuse plan that was approved overwhelmingly at the town's recent annual meeting.

Doore says the goal of the reuse plan is to attract travelers driving to Moosehead Lake. "We'd like to be the place where people stop to take a break before embarking on the final 90 minutes to Moosehead," she said. Doore has high praise for EPA's work in the cleanup and reuse efforts. "EPA is the white knight," she said. "They've been extremely helpful to the community."

RESTORING AND REUSING CONTAMINATED PARCELS

Stylish hotels. Professional baseball stadiums. Riverfront parks. These are just a few examples of how our Brownfields Program has transformed dozens of contaminated eyesore properties across New England into economically productive jewels.

Since 1995, EPA New England has provided over \$50 million of Brownfields assistance—for grants, site evaluations, job training and cleanup loan programs to dozens of communities and agencies. The assistance has led to 630 site assessments, more than 100 cleanups (half of them already completed), and thousands of new jobs.

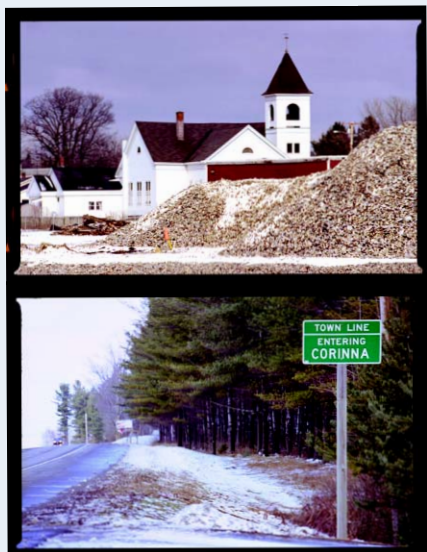
Among the successes: In Old Town, Maine, a restored paper factory site on the Penobscot River is now being used for waterfront trails, shops and a wooden boat museum; In Bridgeport, Conn., an abandoned prop-

erty is now the home of a hugely popular professional baseball park; In New Bedford, Mass. a new riverfront industrial park has been built atop a restored 22-acre parcel and dozens of local jobs have been created through a Brownfields job training program.

And many more cleanups are expected in the years ahead now that President Bush has approved new Brownfields legislation and proposed to double the funds available to help states and communities revitalize Brownfields.

Meanwhile, our Superfund program continues to achieve remarkable success cleaning up the region's most contaminated sites. EPA has spent nearly \$1.2 billion to date on the region's 110 National Priorities List (NPL) sites, including four new sites added last year. On three-

EPA is the white knight. They've been extremely helpful to the community.
- Judy Doore



Restoring Brownfields Sites in New England

	Assessments Completed with EPA funding	Cleanups Started
Connecticut	150	17
Maine	12	3
Massachusetts	142	55
New Hampshire	303	23
Rhode Island	8	3
Vermont	22	7

quarters of those sites, cleanups are underway or have been completed.

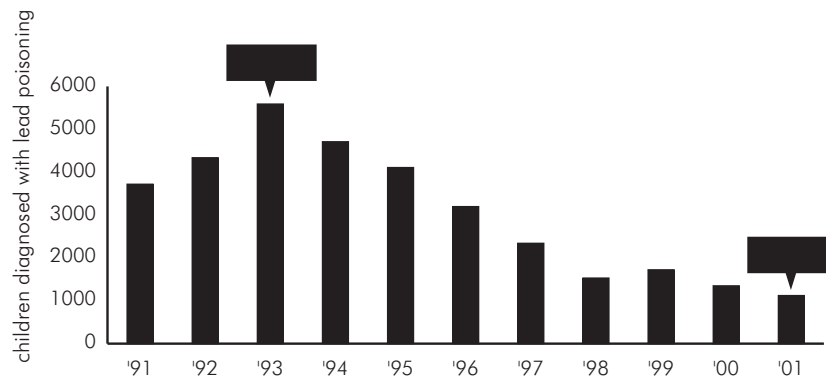
Reuse and redevelopment is a priority in all of these cleanups. Last year, for example, we celebrated the grand opening of a \$23 million transportation center in Woburn built atop the 245-acre Industri-Plex Superfund site. We're also using prospective purchaser agreements to allow future owners to move forward in redeveloping sites without fear of paying future cleanup costs. Two such examples: an agreement that clears the way for the Gardner Little League to redevelop a restored parcel for baseball fields; a recent agreement with the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority regarding 52 acres being transferred from General Electric to the city as part of a comprehensive PCB cleanup.

PROTECTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Last September, EPA New England ordered a Fall River dance studio to postpone its children and adult classes due to lead-paint contamination in the studio building. EPA issued the order after samples showed high lead levels in dust caused by recent sandblasting. With the cooperation of the building's owner, the studio was temporarily closed while the public health threat was removed. The facility, now safe for children, reopened later in the fall.

The Fall River case reflects EPA New England's strong commitment to protect children's health, with lead poisoning, asthma and indoor air pollution being among our biggest priorities. Last year alone we spent

Childhood Lead Poisoning Declining in Boston



source: Boston Public Health Commission

more than \$2 million on lead prevention activities, much of it targeted to urban areas where thousands of children are still being lead poisoned each year.

Among the groups we are working with is the Lead Action Collaborative, which recently held an all-day summit in Boston to end childhood lead poisoning in the city by 2005.

We're also focusing on landlords and property owners to ensure they comply with federal laws requiring them to notify tenants of potential lead-paint hazards. This includes targeted outreach and education for landlords and a heightened enforcement presence, including inspections. One such inspection resulted in a New Hampshire landlord pleading guilty last December to forging lead hazard disclosure docu-

ments. The criminal case stemmed from the lead poisoning death of a two-year-old girl in Manchester, N.H.

EPA New England is spending more than \$350,000 a year on asthma prevention activities, including \$65,000 to the New England Asthma Regional Coordinating Council which last year announced a 12-point action plan for reducing environmental triggers of asthma. The plan includes better tracking of asthma rates, expanded family health education, and new government policies aimed at improving air quality outdoors, in schools and in homes. New England's asthma hospitalization rates are among the highest in the country, with children and urban residents being especially vulnerable.

FOSTERING SMART GROWTH

Unchecked, poorly-planned growth is a major problem that threatens the environment and quality of life for much of New England. EPA New England has been a leader in this regard, using financial assistance, technical expertise and environmental-regulatory authority to foster smart growth projects that benefit both the economy and the environment.

One of the key elements of our Smart Growth Action Plan is offering assistance and expertise to municipal officials through our *Fundamentals of Smart Growth* and *Smart Growth in the City* training programs, which include expert speakers, slide shows and workshops.

We've also provided more than \$2.3 million in grants to support 42 smart growth projects across the

region. Among the projects: the state of Maine has launched a Great American Neighborhood Initiative that has already prompted alternative developments to typical large lot subdivisions; the Conservation Law Foundation and the Vermont Forum on Sprawl recently published a 100-page guide book on smart growth strategies for New England, including specific examples from dozens of communities.

I needed to know what I had to do to comply with environmental regulations with the new garage and, in the meantime, what to do to get the existing garage into compliance.
— Rocky Martin



TRIBAL PROGRAMS

EPA New England has strong partnerships with the region's nine federally recognized tribes, providing extensive technical support as well as about \$3 million of financial grant assistance over the past decade.

With the assistance of EPA and other federal agencies, the tribes have developed cutting-edge environmental programs, one example being the Aroostook Band of Micmacs use of an advanced particulate matter air monitor that will help identify why Aroostook County has among the highest asthma rates in the country. Our assistance also has been pivotal in all nine of the tribes establishing water quality monitoring programs, including the installation of new laboratories and other infrastructure to support drinking water programs. We're also

providing support to three tribes that are implementing best management practices to reduce nonpoint pollution.

High cancer rates among tribal members are a growing concern that has resulted in numerous studies to determine health risks to tribal members who continue fishing, hunting and gathering. The Houlton Band of Maliseets, Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Indian Township, Passamaquoddy Pleasant Point, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head and Narragansett Tribes are all evaluating the effects mercury and other bio-accumulative toxics have to their environments from air deposition. These studies will provide invaluable information not just for tribal members but for all New Englanders who enjoy hunting and fishing on and near tribal lands.

Helping Municipal Highway Garages Comply With Environmental Laws

Last year when Rocky Martin began planning for a new highway department garage, he needed answers to a few questions. "I needed to know what I had to do to comply with environmental regulations with the new garage and, in the meantime, what to do to get the existing garage into compliance," said Martin, director of public works in the town of Hinesburg, VT.

As a town official in this community of 5,000, Martin had good reason to be concerned. EPA has assessed large penalties against municipal facilities that were not in compliance with environmental requirements. And he needed to keep an eye on his budget. Building a new garage is going to cost \$250,000, he estimates. So he reached out to John Daly, who works in the Municipal Compliance Division at the Vermont Agency for Natural Resources.

Daly had recently learned of a compliance assistance initiative offered by EPA New England and the American Public Works Association. Under the program launched last year, public works departments are invited to perform self audits and then report their findings, including environmental violations, to EPA. They then must correct the violations within a specific time frame. In return, EPA offers substantial penalty relief and makes inspecting DPWs that participate a low priority.

"Rocky called me and grilled me with a bunch of questions," Daly said. "I went out and did an inspection and then he took the ball and ran with it."

Hinesburg is among a handful of DPWs in Vermont taking part in the voluntary initiative. More than 300 are participating from across New England.